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(1) Foreign Minister Aso, US Ambassador Schieffer in telephone conversation agree that resolution on North Korea the result of Japan-US cooperation

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 2) (Excerpt)  
Evening, July 19, 2006

Foreign Minister Aso talked with US Ambassador to Japan Schieffer by telephone this morning. The Ambassador, commenting on the resolution on North Korea adopted by the United Nations Security Council, stated: "A strong message was sent thanks to the cooperation of the US and Japan. I thank Japan for its efforts." The Foreign Minister, too, expressed his appreciation, replying, "Success came from the close cooperation of Japan and the United States." He then reported that Ground Self-Defense Force troops had completed their withdrawal from Iraq. The Ambassador noted, "The operations of the Self-Defense Forces were a great achievement."

(2) Chief Cabinet Secretary Abe already on diplomatic stage; His capability being tested in run-up to LDP presidential election

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 2) (Full)  
July 18, 2006

Chief Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe is considered as the favorite to succeed Prime Minister Koizumi. The Japanese government's response to North Korea's missile launches has served an important test of

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his diplomatic acumen. He played a leading role in drafting a sanctions resolution presented to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) as a deputy for Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, who was traveling abroad. Abe has won popular support from the people, using the keywords abduction and North Korea in making a full-scale diplomatic debut.

When discussions at the UNSC entered the homestretch on the evening of July 14, Abe rushed back to the Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei) to have a telephone conference with deputy national security advisor to the US President Stephen Hadley. He told Hadley: "The positions of Japan and the US are in complete agreement. The two countries have completely agreed not to change their determination to adopt a binding resolution that includes sanctions.

Reiterating that there would be no compromise, Abe during a press conference repeatedly used the word completely. The word is close to categorical expressions Prime Minister Koizumi has frequently used at critical political junctures. He used this word with an image of a strong leader in mind.

Masaharu Kono, director general of the Foreign Policy Bureau of the Foreign Ministry, who served as a secretary to his father Shintaro Abe, when he was a foreign minister, fully reported what was going on at the series of debates at the UN. He visited the Kantei early in the morning on the 14 as well and analyzed the situation in Abe's office.

The US is strongly aware of Abe's presence. During the prime minister's absence, Ambassador Schieffer met with Abe twice at the Kantei. On the 14th, Abe urged Schieffer that Japan and the US should fall in step with each other for the adoption of the draft sanctions resolution, noting: "This is a matter of an emergency. I would likely you to relay my message to President Bush and Secretary of State Rice."

A government source said: "An acting prime minister is empowered to do almost anything. The words from the prime minister are tantamount to the will of the Japanese government." Great authority means great responsibility. Success and failure of Abe's handling of the North

Korea issue has a rebound effect on the evaluation of himself as a candidate for the next prime minister.

(3) Adoption of UN resolution against North Korea: Result of Japan's tough diplomatic approach

YOMIURI (Page 1) (Full)  
July 17, 2006

"This is a great result and victory for Japan's diplomacy. This achievement has come owing to Japan's efforts. We have shared this view with Britain and France."

This generously complimentary remark came from US Presidential Assistant Hadley for National Security Affairs, during a telephone conversation with Chief Cabinet Secretary Abe early on July 16, Japan time, soon after the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) decided to unanimously adopt a resolution condemning North Korea. In a phone discussion with Foreign Minister Aso right after Hadley's call, US Secretary of State Rice also praised Japan's diplomatic efforts.

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For the first time since it became a UN member on Dec. 18, 1956, Japan projected an unprecedented strong presence in that international diplomatic arena when the UNSC adopted the resolution.

One of the major pillars of Japanese diplomacy has been its focus on the UN. But until now, Japan had never taken the lead in submitting a resolution to the UNSC. In its first submission, Japan tenaciously called for the need to adopt a severe resolution that would include sanctions. It remained firm in its basic position to the end.

North Korea's missile launches created a national crisis for and posed a threat to Japan. In contrast, when Pyongyang launched a Taepodong missile in 1998, all the UN did then was to only issue a press statement, the weakest form of showing the UN's view. Learning a lesson from this experience, Japan took a firm stand this time.

Japan and the United States stuck to the idea of referring to Chapter 7 of the UN Charter till the last moment, because they thought that chapter can serve as the ground for the imposition of sanctions against North Korea, but this idea was not realized due to opposition by China and Russia. Faced with the reality in the UNSC where its permanent members have a veto right, "Japan was forced to choose between a resolution mentioning Chapter 7 that could not win unanimous approval and a resolution without any mention of Chapter 7 that was unanimously approved. A unanimously adopted resolution would have a stronger message," Aso said. Japan preferred to the latter option.

A senior Foreign Ministry official explained: "In the past Japan had aimed at realizing international cooperation in the way to play along with other countries, but this time Japan aimed at playing a role to build international cooperation." This means Japan sought to depart from its "passive" diplomacy. Kazuya Sakamoto, professor of international political science at Osaka University, praised Japan's new diplomatic approach: "Japan, because of its prewar experience, had tended to be overly fearful of being isolated in the international community, but this time Japan, not fearing isolation, maintained a firm stand. This stance was good."

North Korea, however, refused to accept the resolution, replying less than an hour after it was adopted. Japan succeeded in having its resolution against North Korea adopted, but this does not mean the North Korean threat to Japan has vanished. This is the harsh reality Japan must face.

The diplomatic tug of war over the resolution has made Japan realize anew the difficulty in narrowing the gap in views with China and Russia. Japan also finds itself in a "twisted" situation where South Korea is supposed to see the North's missiles as a threat like Japan but it was opposed to Japan's response to the North's missile launches this time. Although "It would be impossible for all the

countries on the planet to synchronize with each other," according to Sakamoto, the question facing Japan is how to make good use of such international forums as the six-party talks, the UN, and the Group of Eight (G8), and how to reinforce the encircling net around North Korea.

The adopted resolution is merely a milestone for there is a long way to go. The true value of Japan's diplomatic capabilities will be tested in the coming months.

(4) ASDF troops on Iraq mission expected to serve as the US

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military's contractor; Attacks on Baghdad Airport in combat zone commonplace; Transporting US troops may drag ASDF into America's war

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Pages 27 & 28)  
July 19, 2006

The Ground Self-Defense Force has now completely pulled out of Iraq, putting an end to its humanitarian and reconstruction assistance without incurring any casualties in its mission. But the Kuwait-based Air Self-Defense Force will continue its airlift mission. The government has decided to expand the ASDF mission to fly to Baghdad Airport, which has constantly been under attacks by armed insurgents. The government has defined Baghdad Airport as being in a non-combat zone. What kind of role is the Kuwait-based ASDF going to play?

Mika Yamamoto of Japan Press, who has been covering the news in Iraq, took this view about the government's decision to expand the ASDF mission:

"Baghdad Airport is not a non-combat zone. When I was at the airport about six months ago, seven or eight thunderous rockets landed in its premises, shaking the ground. Airport workers' reactions indicated that such was a daily occurrence. Attacks on the airport are so common that they do not make the news anymore. There is no guarantee that rockets will not hit the C-130 transport planes."

Defense Agency Director-General Fukushima Nukaga told the Lower House Iraq Reconstruction Assistance Special Committee in June: "The SDF may engage in activities at Baghdad Airport, which is in a non-combat zone."

The ASDF's mission would require C-130 transport planes to land in the northern part of Iraq and Baghdad Airport. ASDF personnel on transport planes have worn helmets and flak jackets. An ASDF public affairs officer explained: "We have taken the maximum level of safeguards available under today's technology."

Specifically, every C-130 is now armed with equipment to detect incoming missiles, a flare to emanate heat sources to avoid infrared-guided missiles, a bubble window over the cockpit to watch outside, bulletproof sheets around the cockpit, and so on.

It is a fact that militants have attacked aircraft using Baghdad Airport. In January 2004, a large US transport plane was attacked from the ground immediately after taking off from the airport. With its engine blown up, the aircraft made an emergency landing. In January last year, the British military's C-130 crashed when attacked shortly after taking off from Baghdad Airport, killing 10 crewmembers. In November 2004, a ground-based missile hit the US military's transport plane. The plane's left engine was engulfed in flames for about 10 minutes before making an emergency landing.

Even Iraqis back away from Baghdad Airport.

Yamamoto warned:

"A car bomb slammed into an airport entrance. Many people hostile toward the multinational forces live around the airport. Iraqi residents don't approach the airport. The road between the airport and downtown Baghdad is so dangerous that you have to pay 100,000 yen to a taxi driver for a 30-minute drive. On entering the airport,

you have to ride with an armed bodyguard sandwiched by two additional vehicles and run at 100 km per hour. The airport can be seen clearly from many spots in its vicinity dotted with palm trees and private houses."

Military analyst Motoaki Kamiura noted:

"A mobile anti-air missile is launched 10 - 15 degrees upward for safety reasons. Such a missile is suitable for attacking a plane taking off from behind the sniper. A missile can destroy a C-130 engine and a wing."

Of the 5,500 SDF personnel dispatched to Iraq, six have committed suicide after returning home. Although the causes remain unknown, the Iraq mission built up tensions. ASDF troops are likely to be exposed to greater risks. Some 100 ASDF rotational troops left for Kuwait earlier this month.

Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi trumpeted the withdrawal of the ground troops who had not fired even a single shot or shed blood. Political commentator Minoru Morita offered this view:

"The role of the ASDF, which will remain in Kuwait, is totally distinct from that of the GSDF. The GSDF deployment was politically aimed at preventing the Bush administration from being isolated in the international community. In contrast, the ASDF is going to take military action practically in sync with the US military."

Lower House member Nobuto Hosaka of the Social Democratic Party, who regards the ASDF's role as a flying truck, noted:

"The GSDF mission in Samawah was limited to humanitarian and reconstruction assistance in limited geographical areas. The ASDF's role is not limited. Air troops would not airlift water and medical supplies alone. The task of transporting US troops may draw the ASDF into America's war."

The government and the ruling coalition have also begun discussing a permanent law allowing Japan to swiftly deploy SDF troops overseas without a UN resolution.

The question of establishing a permanent law will unmistakably be a challenge for the next administration.

But given the ever-changing international situation, time-limited legislation instead of a permanent law is the prevalent international trend, according to Rei Shiratori, professor of politics at Akita International University. Shiratori explained: "The government was allowed to decide to pull the ground troops out of Iraq at this time because the Iraq Reconstruction Law is a time-limited law. A permanent law would not have allowed it."

It is said that a permanent law will help turn Japan into a normal country that can independently determine the SDF's overseas mission. Morita does not agree:

"In reality, Japan would just follow in the US' footsteps. Japan simply sent troops to Iraq in compliance with a US request, not based on a UN resolution. If this situation persists, the SDF would become the US military's subcontractor. Even though such danger is eminent, nobody dares to voice opposition. When Prime Minister Tsuyoshi Inukai was killed in 1932, one journalist wrote, 'It is

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truly dreadful that nobody says anything about it.' The situation

today resembles those days."

Kamiura said this on behalf of ASDF personnel:

"The multinational forces have sufficient transport capability. SDF

personnel think it is absurd for the prime minister to decide to (keep the ASDF in Kuwait) simply because he was asked by President Bush. But they have no choice but to go to Kuwait because if they refuse, other personnel would be sent there. Can the government ensure the safety of such personnel? I feel sorry for the ASDF."

(5) Budget request ceiling: Finance, foreign ministries agree to 3% cut in ODA in fiscal 2007

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 2) (Full)  
Evening, July 19, 2006

Finance Minister Sadakazu Tanigaki and Foreign Minister Taro Aso this morning discussed by telephone the ceiling for budget requests to be set for fiscal 2007. They agreed to a 3% cut in the official development assistance (ODA) budget from the fiscal 2006 level (which was 759.7 billion yen). The government will include this policy decision in the budget ceiling planned for cabinet approval on July 21.

The policy course of continuing annual ODA cuts ranging from 2 to 4% over the five-year period of fiscal 2007-2011 will be included in the basic economic and fiscal policy guidelines 2006, which form the basic policy line for the government's Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy to manage the economy. Although the Finance Ministry sought a 4% cut in the fiscal 2007 ceiling, the Foreign Ministry objected strongly, resulting in a cut that was about the same as that in fiscal 2006.

(6) Defense Agency to be restructured into 5 bureaus

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 2) (Abridged)  
Eve., July 14, 2006

The Defense Agency decided on July 14 on a restructuring plan to disband the Defense Facilities Administration Agency (DFAA) over its bid-rigging. The DFAA's current setup of four departments, including the Construction Department and the Facilities Department, will be reorganized and absorbed into the Defense Agency's newly planned sections. The agency plans to establish two new bureaus for infrastructure construction and local planning and also to establish a central acquisition office. In addition, the agency will also establish an inspector general's office for auditing and compliance oversight in order to prevent bid-rigging.

The Defense Agency, which currently has a total of 57 divisions including those in the DFAA. The agency will reduce about 10% of these divisions so as not to only end up a merger with the DFAA. The government will present bills to the Diet at its ordinary session in January next year to revise relevant laws.

Consequently, the Defense Agency will have a total of five bureaus, including the Defense Policy Bureau (Defense Bureau up until the end of July), which determines a basic course of action for Japan's national security, and the Operations and Planning Bureau (Defense Operations Bureau at present), which deals with specific situations.

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The Central Acquisition Office will be a combined body of the Central Contract Office and the Finance and Equipment Bureau Cost Accounting Department. In late July, the agency will also launch a central equipment office, which will be further reorganized later.

(7) Minshuto to notify local chapters across country it is establishing workplace chapters in industrial associations, aiming to undermine LDP stronghold ahead of Upper House election

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Excerpts)  
July 14, 2006

The Democratic Party of Japan (Minshuto) yesterday decided to actively establish workplace chapters that would become a power base for industrial associations across the country -- a switch from its previously cautious stance. Minshuto will convey this decision to

the party's prefectural chapters throughout the country during a national convention of the prefectural chapter secretaries general in Naha City on July 14. This move came on the heels of a Minshuto dentists association being established by members of the Ibaraki Dentists Federation, a local organization of the Japan Dentists Federation, a powerful support organization for the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). The aim for Minshuto is to chip away at LDP support groups prior to the Upper House election in 2007. The LDP and Minshuto have already begun vying to capture votes from industrial associations.

According to Minshuto's party rules, workplace chapters are treated as voluntary groups and do not come under the category of official party organizations. This is different from the LDP, whose party rules treat local chapters as official local organizations that can receive political funds on behalf of the party. This difference reflects Minshuto's desire to avoid cases of such chapters turning into pressure groups, as well as to avoid opaqueness in the flow of political funds. Minshuto was until recently less eager about creating workplace chapters, in part because industrial organizations have been all viewed as being the LDP's stronghold.

A senior Minshuto member pins his hopes on the rising move to establish such party chapters in one-seat constituencies that will face the Upper House election next year. Those constituencies are said to determine whether the party will win victory. "It is of great significance for our party to have established our industry chapter in a conservative district like Ibaraki. We'd like to spread this Ibaraki pattern in various industry circles, such as post offices, agricultural cooperatives, and small firms," this senior member said.

In order to deal with an unfavorable move in Ibaraki Prefecture involving the Japan Dentists Federation, the LDP sent its prefectural chapters across the country the following view dated July 5: "In order for the Japan Dentists Federation to attain its goals politically, it needs to back the LDP, for doing so is a pragmatic approach." The party has sought the federation's full support for the LDP.

The LDP's industry-specific chapters are on a marked decline, with membership dropping from some 1,610,000 persons in 2000 to 590,000 in 2005.

Confusion involving industry chapters is continuing in the LDP. For instance, the Japan Medical Association, a major support body for the LDP, was divided over the election of its chairman, involving an

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LDP House of Counselors member. The National Federation of Agricultural Cooperative Associations' (Zennoh) federation of national farmers farm policy campaign has decided in a primary election to field a newcomer for the Upper House election next year instead of the incumbent the LDP whom the federation supported in the 2001 Upper House election.

(8) LDP presidential election campaign underway: Yamasaki faction proposes secular memorial for the war dead; Tanigaki faction calls current relations with China abnormal; Nikai Group remains silent out of consideration to Abe?

SANKEI (Page 5) (Abridged)  
July 19, 2006

Differences in the positions of various factions in the Democratic Party of Japan (LDP) over Asia diplomacy and the prime minister's visits to Yasukuni shrine - both contentious issues in the party presidential election in September - are visible in their policy proposals. The Yamasaki faction led by former deputy LDP president Taku Yamasaki, who is trying to unite anti-Abe forces, yesterday came up with a set of policy proposals including a call to look into the possibility of constructing a national secular memorial for the war dead. The Tanigaki faction led by Finance Minister Sadakazu Tanigaki criticized the current Japan-China relations as abnormal. The Nikai Group, which is regarded as having a deep relationship with China, refrained from making detailed reference to the issue,

generating a view that it giving consideration to frontrunner Abe in the upcoming LDP presidential election.

The Yamasaki faction unveiled a policy vision at a political fund-raising party held on July 1. The package categorically noted the need to look into the possibility of constructing a facility where people can offer their sincere condolences to the war dead and renew pledges to protect peace. It also calls for looking into what kind of place Yasukuni Shrine should be. Yamasaki told a news conference, "Though there are arguments for and against constructing such a facility, the package included my position as the chairman." Japan was unable to have a sanctions resolution that invokes Chapter 7 of the UN Charter adopted at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Touching on this incident, Yamasaki in a speech given the same day pointed out that the "absence of dialogue with China is causing a serious setback." He underscored the significance of constructing a national secular memorial and realizing the East Asia Community Initiative, saying: "Japan-China relations have been cold politically but hot economically, a situation the post-Koizumi administration must correct. What is hampering this effort is the Yasukuni issue."

The Tanigaki faction strongly criticized the Japan-China relations during the Koizumi administration and is positive about improving them.

The Niwa-Koga faction also incorporated in its policy proposal a call for strengthening relations with China, advocating the need to promote the East Asia Community Initiative. However, the package stopped short of mentioning the Yasukuni issue, regarding which former LDP Secretary General Makoto Koga, co-chairman of the faction, has proposed separate enshrinement of Class-A war criminals. This stance reflects the internal situation of the faction, which has no potential candidate to succeed Koizumi and many of whose members are close to Abe.

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Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) Minister Toshihiro Nikai, who chairs the Nikai group, on the 15th told a news conference, "There is no need for our group to express views on the Yasukuni issue or the China issue." He thus indicated his intention of not including those issues in the group's policy proposals. In view of the fact that the Nikai group had been considering including a proposal for joint history research by Japanese and Chinese experts, this statement is viewed as Nikai having given consideration to Abe, who wants to avoid the Yasukuni issue in the election campaign.

Reference to Asia diplomacy in policy proposals issued by LDP factions (extracts)

Mori faction  
No special reference

Tsushima faction

SIPDIS  
Plans to issue policy proposals on August 10. Intends to bring up the issue as one of various themes.

Niwa-Koga faction  
Strengthen future-oriented Japan-China relations with the aim of building confidence

Yamasaki faction  
Look into the possibility of constructing a facility where people can offer their sincere condolences to the war dead and renew their pledge to protect peace, as well as considering the nature of Yasukuni Shrine

Ibuki faction  
Aim for Japan that coexists with a prosperous Asia through further consideration to diplomatic efforts

Tanigaki faction  
Correct the current abnormal relationship with neighboring countries



and region.

Komura faction

Make efforts to maintain and develop a good political relationship with various Asian countries

Nikai group

Plans to issue policy proposals as early as August 9. No special reference to the issue

Kono group

Coordination under way to release policy proposals in late August

(9) Number of guest foreign workers to be expanded, LDP special committee decides

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Full)

July 19, 2006

The Liberal Democratic Party's (LDP) Special Committee on Foreign Workers (chaired by Yoshio Kimura) at a meeting on July 19 finalized guidelines aimed at increasing the number of guest foreign workers to be allowed into Japan. The report called on the government to newly set up a system of accepting competent personnel who have a certain level of Japanese language ability and skills. In particular, the report incorporated a call for allowing foreigners who have obtained Japanese licenses for nursing-care and social

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welfare service providers to take up employment in Japan. Regarding existing educational and technical training systems for foreigners, which have been pointed out as leading to an inflow of unskilled workers, the report proposed extending the duration of such training from the current three years to five years, while keeping in mind the need to prevent such workers from staying permanently.

The guidelines also included: (1) fiscal assistance to municipalities where foreign residents are sharply increasing; (2) providing Japanese language education to foreign pupils and students at public schools; and (3) establishing a council of government agencies tackling the foreign worker issue. The panel intends to call on the government to look into the details of the report and revise necessary laws accordingly, after obtaining approval from Policy Affairs Committee Chairman Ichiro Nakagawa.

SCHIEFFER